



EUROPEAN UNION

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## Statement by High Representative Catherine Ashton on further escalation of violence in Israel and Gaza

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission issued the following statement today:

*"I am deeply concerned at the escalating violence in Israel and the Gaza Strip and deplore the loss of civilian lives on both sides. The rocket attacks by Hamas and other factions in Gaza which began this current crisis are totally unacceptable for any government and must stop. Israel has the right to protect its population from these kinds of attacks. I urge Israel to ensure that its response is proportionate.*

*I spoke with leaders in the region including PM Netanyahu and with the Egyptian President's office and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. I stressed the need to prevent a further escalation and more loss of life. In my discussions I made the point that we must move forward in finding a solution to the Middle East conflict so that millions of people in the region can finally live in peace and security. I hope Egyptian PM Kandil in his visit to Gaza today will be able calm the situation."*

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**P R E S S**

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